

Asio flammeus (Short-eared Owl)

Priority 2 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)

Class: Aves (Birds)
Order: Strigiformes (Owls)
Family: Strigidae (Typical Owls)

General comments:

Breeding population at edge of range and state listed, wintering birds a higher regional priority (Regional Spp. Of Greatest conservation need BCR 30 as wintering population). Rarity coincides with the vulnerability of grasslands in the northeast. Limited data: 1) Minimal detections during grassland bird surveys, 2) nest documented in Easton (1996), 3) territorial behavior Jonesport (1988), 4) individual present March and April Petit Manan NWR, and 5) historical observations reference "The Birds of Maine", Knight 1908 and "Maine Birds", Palmer 1949. May be present every winter, uncertainty of consistent breeding presence.

Species Conservation Range Maps for Short-eared Owl:

Town Map: [Asio flammeus Towns.pdf](#)

Subwatershed Map: [Asio flammeus HUC12.pdf](#)

SGCN Priority Ranking - Designation Criteria:

Risk of Extirpation:

Maine Status: Threatened

State Special Concern or NMFS Species of Concern: NA

Recent Significant Declines: NA

Regional Endemic: NA

High Regional Conservation Priority:

Northeast Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee:

Risk: Yes, Data: Yes, Area: No, Spec: No, Warrant Listing: No, Total Categories with "Yes": 2

United States Birds of Conservation Concern:

Bird of Conservation Concern in Bird Conservation Regions 14 and/or 30: Yes

High Climate Change Vulnerability: NA

Understudied rare taxa: NA

Historical: NA

Culturally Significant: NA

Professional Discretion:

Current criteria ranked *Asio flammeus* as SGCN priority 1, however, species should be SGCN priority 2 based on professional discretion.

Justification: Breeding population at edge of range and state listed, wintering birds a higher regional priority (Regional Spp. Of Greatest conservation need BCR 30 as wintering population). Rarity coincides with the vulnerability of grasslands in the northeast. Limited data: 1) Minimal detections during grassland bird surveys, 2) nest documented in Easton (1996), 3) territorial behavior Jonesport (1988), 4) individual present March and April Petit Manan NWR, and 5) historical observations reference "The Birds of Maine", Knight 1908 and "Maine Birds", Palmer 1949. May be present every winter, uncertainty of consistent breeding presence.

Habitats Assigned to Short-eared Owl:

Formation Name Agricultural

Macrogroup Name Agricultural

Habitat System Name: Cultivated Crops

Habitat System Name: Pasture-Hay

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Formation Name	Developed
Macrogroup Name	Extractive
Habitat System Name:	Quarries-Pits-Stripmines
Macrogroup Name	Maintained Grasses and Mixed Cover
Habitat System Name:	Urban & Recreational Grasses
Macrogroup Name	Urban-Suburban Built
Habitat System Name:	Residential - Rural-Sparse
Formation Name	Freshwater Marsh
Macrogroup Name	Coastal Plain Pond
Habitat System Name:	Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Pond
Macrogroup Name	Emergent Marsh
Habitat System Name:	Laurentian-Acadian Freshwater Marsh
Macrogroup Name	Modified-Managed Marsh
Habitat System Name:	Modified-Managed Marsh
Macrogroup Name	Wet Meadow-Shrub Marsh
Habitat System Name:	Introduced Wetland and Riparian Vegetation
Habitat System Name:	Laurentian-Acadian Wet Meadow-Shrub Swamp
Formation Name	Grassland & Shrubland
Macrogroup Name	Ruderal Shrubland & Grassland
Habitat System Name:	Ruderal Upland - Old Field
Formation Name	Intertidal
Macrogroup Name	Intertidal Tidal Marsh (peat-forming)
Habitat System Name:	Acadian Coastal Salt Marsh
Habitat System Name:	Coastal Plain Tidal Marsh
Formation Name	Northeastern Upland Forest
Macrogroup Name	Central Oak-Pine
Habitat System Name:	Central Appalachian Pine-Oak Rocky Woodland
Habitat System Name:	Northeastern Interior Pine Barrens

Stressors Assigned to Short-eared Owl:

Stressor Priority Level based on Severity and Actionability		Moderate Severity	High Severity
	Highly Actionable	Medium-High	High
	Moderately Actionable	Medium	Medium-High
	Actionable with Difficulty	Low	Low

IUCN Level 1 Threat Natural Systems Modifications

IUCN Level 2 Threat: Other Ecosystem Modifications

Severity: Moderate Severity

Actionability: Moderately actionable

Notes: Reforestation and loss of large, intact grasslands contributed to population decline. Minimize impacts of development and habitat conversion.

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IUCN Level 1 Threat **Other Options**

IUCN Level 2 Threat: Lack of knowledge

Severity: Moderate Severity

Actionability: Moderately actionable

Notes: Need more survey information during breeding season targeted to blueberry barrens (Washington County) and agricultural fields (Aroostook County)

Species Level Conservation Actions Assigned to Short-eared Owl:

None. *Only species specific conservation actions that address high (red) or medium-high (orange) priority stressors are summarized here.*

Conservation Actions Associated with the Grassland Guild:

Conservation Action	Category: Public Outreach	Biological Priority: high	Type: new
Develop a program to inform small landowners of the best methods for keeping fields open for grassland wildlife			

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Livestock Farming and Ranching

Conservation Action	Category: Species Management	Biological Priority: high	Type: new
Develop a BMP guide for farmers to minimize negative effects of cutting hay/silage during the grassland bird nesting season. NRCS recommendations should be viewed as a start with increased emphasis on timing, field size, and bird behavioral cues.			

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Livestock Farming and Ranching

Broad Taxonomic Group Conservation Actions:

Additional relevant conservation actions for this species are assigned within broader taxonomic groups in Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan: Element 4, Table 4-1.

Habitat Based Conservation Actions:

Additional conservation actions that may benefit habitat(s) associated with this species can be found in Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan: Element 4, Table 4-15. Click on the Habitat Grouping of interest to launch a habitat based report summarizing relevant conservation actions and associated SGCN.

The Wildlife Action Plan was developed through a lengthy participatory process with state agencies, targeted conservation partners, and the general public. The Plan is non-regulatory. The species, stressors, and voluntary conservation actions identified in the Plan complement, but do not replace, existing work programs and priorities by state agencies and partners.